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Working from a Format

In writing a play for the puppet theater, there are three important considerations to keep in mind first; the kind of puppet, the puppeteer and the audience.

Rod puppets generally lend themselves to the stylized type of play. Their articulation is limited altho often quite graceful, and the playwright should take this into consideration.

If it is a marionette, many tricks can be incorporated into the script. They can fly easily thru the air, so lend themselves beautifully to birds, fairies and creatures of the air and sea. Fantastic shapes can come to life and move about the stage as a human figure. Trick effects can be easily accomplished however simple things such as picking up articles are so difficult that they are better eliminated in the original script.

Fist puppets are intimate, possible of great subtlety, and are probably one of the best types for satire. But they are also very alive and credible in plays.

Keeping the type of puppet in mind, the playwright's next consideration is the script which must be made up of action, conflict and suspense even though dealing with a very short episode, perhaps built from a record or a poem or a stunt.

In order to stir the writer's imagination the best procedure is to gather some children's stories, always available in book stores and libraries, delve into old fairy tales and explore the new ones. Russian, Finnish, Indian, Persian fairytales have some fantastic ideas in them which could be manipulated by puppets. Ideas can be gleaned from mythology, folk tales and some of the old classics, and it is possible to build an idea for a show around a stunt found in Fun or Party Books. If any of these stories are used in their original or recognizable form, permission to produce the idea as a puppet play must be granted by the publisher or author.

Plots and plays don't grow like Topsy: they're formulated and reformulated. A good satisfactory play is not born out of a few hours of hasty writing. It takes time, ideas, research, thought, writing, rewriting, producing and rewriting again.

Keeping in mind the three important keys to a good play, conflict, suspense and action, it must also be remembered that a child wants his hero or heroine to have admirable qualities, he wants them to be likeable, or even better, lovable. The hero can get into plenty of difficulties; in fact, he must—he can become involved because of some other character or because of his own foolishness (here we can go back to the old Greek tragedy and Shakespearean idea of the noble character with one fatal flaw). The children, however, don't want the foolishness to be fatal, the hero should recognize his flaw and reform. He should overcome his difficulties through his own prowess.

The child demands an "and then and then" story. He wants something to happen; he likes variety and action.

These things must be remembered and developed as the plot is taking shape into action format.

An action format is a detailed description of all action in the plot without help of dialogue. With a good action format an audience should be able to understand the story (with some limitations) without the dialogue. In other word, the story should be understandable if acted only in pantomime.

Puppeteers may be called upon to give shows at a variety of special occasions, such as children's parties, holiday programs, women's clubs and men's clubs. It is well to develop a script which is adjustable to all occasions, - for instance, a script involving the idea of cooperation.

The puppeteers may be presenting a show at a children's birthday party. This type of script might have a clown, who is having a birthday party for his friends the animals; but he runs into terrible difficulties. He can't get the room cleaned, he becomes entangled with the decorations he is trying to put up. He tries to crack some walnuts with a hammer, he hits his finger or the hammer objects to hitting the walnut, he starts to bake a cake but he has no eggs. He is completely frustrated and weeping when the horse arrives. The horse sweeps the floor with his tail, the birds easily decorate the room, the squirrel cracks the nuts, and the hen brings him an egg. The party ends happily with a beautiful birthday cake and a present attractively wrapped for each animal. The clown even hands a present to the little girl for whom the party is given and they all sing "Happy Birthday."

With the same puppets the script can be adjusted to another situation with the basic idea of cooperation. On this occasion, the clown may be portraying a men's club presenting a show or a money raising project where he is just as frustrated. The animals put on costumes to help him produce a musical, a circus or a fair, which is a huge success. Since men's clubs love to poke fun at each other the animals can take names of members, or the whole idea can be turned into a satire, if enough information, either general or particular is available about the club.

The puppeteers may want a longer, more formal type of play which is very difficult to find in ready-made form.

If the puppeteers decide to write their own play, their first step should be the writing of the action format. This initial step is extremely important.

In the format of Red Riding Hood, the playwright has decided to make it a three-act show (Use a minimum number of scenes remembering that a child's interest is difficult to hold through numerous intermissions).

Format, - Act 1. Scene opens in Red Riding Hood's home.

Dog is playing. Mother is cleaning. Red Riding Hood enters and puts dog through some tricks. Hugs dog, as mother exits but returns with red cape. Red Riding Hood tries it on. Obvious pleasure, dances with it to show it. Dances with dog. Mother takes basket from table. They fill the basket. The animated cookies dance on the table and jump into the basket. Dog brings his bone for basket. Mother and Red Riding laugh, take out the bone. Dog is crestfallen. Red Riding Hood pets the dog, kisses her mother, starts off. Dog howls dismally, but not allowed to go. Scene closes as mother says perhaps she should have let the dog go, might have protected Red Riding Hood.

In the format of the first act the playwright has established character, especially the heroine. She is a sweet, pretty, kind, grateful, dutiful

little girl and she is full of fun. The action is purposeful. The dialogue will have to suggest warnings against the woods and the wolf on the trip to her grandmother's. The little dog's frantic barking should heighten the suspense.

Act II. In the heart of the woods.

The squirrel and the rabbit can be scampering and playing with a bird, skunk stands dejectedly. Nobody will play with him. Others run off as Red Riding Hood comes in. She is singing a song. Flowers in the woods dance to her singing. She notices the skunk. Finds out why he is troubled. She calls the squirrel, the rabbit, and bird together. Through her influence they finally make friends with the skunk. They find that she is going to her grandmother's. Squirrel gives her his nuts and berries, the rabbit his carrots. The birds bring her some flowers. Again the skunk is dejected having nothing to give. They hear a chop, chop, chop. Animals run to hide. Red Riding Hood doesn't come with them. They dash back to her. Finally peek from their hiding place behind the trees explaining to Red Riding Hood they thought it was the big, bad wolf, but it is only the wood chopper. They have several false frights. Red Riding Hood informs them that she is not afraid. When the wolf comes the animals hide. He is pleasant to Red Riding Hood. After she goes on her way, wolf shows his real colors and plots to take the short cut. As he exits the animals hold hasty council and skunk who has been unable to give her anything timidly volunteers to try to warn the wood chopper of the little girl's danger. As he leaves, rabbit and the squirrel are sure that he will fail.

Once more the writer has established suspense, conflict between good and evil, and has further characterized his heroine and suggested a natural solution. Here again the story is told in action with a bit of dialogue, although not much is needed. The format for the third act will be worked out by the same system.

Puppet animals are wonderful characters and children are entranced with them. Some animals should never be made into villains. A rabbit, a squirrel and a mouse are not apt to be accepted as very convincing villains. These animals appeal to children. A dragon, a wolf or an alligator might become a villain; however, even these can be made appealing given the proper characterizations. There should be no inconsistencies in the story, and once a character is established, he should do nothing incompatible with it.

A writer should remember that children are very sensitive to beauty. Glitter, gold and silver help glamorize costumes or scenery for them. Scenery can be simple as it should not detract from the puppets, but a play which gives a chance to the scenic designer will have a better chance for success.

Children are moral little creatures. They have a strong sense of right and wrong (especially for their heroes and heroines). They believe consciously or unconsciously that black is black, and white is white and that the world is essentially a good place to live because good always triumphs over evil. No writer need fling a moral into their faces; they are perfectly capable of drawing their own conclusions.

A good play well written and carefully executed will always intrigue them.

Festival Lectures

PUPPETRY IN EDUCATION

Puppetry in education was discussed from two different viewpoints by Marjorie McPharlin and Mabel F. Alstetter of the Dept. of Education, Miami University.

"What can Puppetry do for Education?" Marjorie McPharlin thought should be reversed to read, "What can Education do for Puppetry?" She added, "There is a great need for educators to realize their opportunity to bring back to puppetry the dramatic performance which has been lost since 1914 when puppetry became a tool for advertising, therapy and educational experimentation." She stressed the fact that the puppet theater had not kept up with the modern trend in music and art; that we should not depend upon tradition for today's theater, but that we should utilize the material of the unreal futuristic world. It offers possibilities for dramatic experiences that we can not find elsewhere. The puppet theater is empty if it repeats the human theater.

Mabel Alstetter, who works with the creative workshop attacked the problem from a different angle. She declared that much educational puppetry had bogged down because of teacher's insistence upon standards. The puppetry program becomes too fixed and rigid. Attached, as it usually is to the art program, the art values are the only ones stressed and the art standards set are too high. She urged that teachers grow in their concern for the child, for, as she pointed out, the child can come to a full personality through completion of a puppet project; he can learn to take his proper place in the social pattern of his group.

Children have a great imagination, she stressed, until they come under the influence of the teacher. As subject matter for imaginative material she stressed the fairy tales and folk tales, but from a new angle, for instance, Cinderella from the rat's point of view.

SHOWMANSHIP

Opening the first session on "Showmanship", Alfred Wallace confessed to difficulty in defining that elusive quality — described it variously as the ability of the showman to hold the complete attention of the audience, that extra "plus" that makes a show unforgettable, and compared it to quicksilver which flies into many parts when one tries to grasp it.

Proper development of a script as the first essential of showmanship was Peg Blicke's assignment. She named the first essential of a successful script conflict or suspense, building toward something that is going to happen rather than depending upon one episode after another to carry the story. She urged playwrights to keep in mind what the puppeteers

could do best as well as the abilities of the type of puppet used. By working from a format, writing action first, and developing the story in pantomime, almost with out words, the writer can then adapt the story to the visual requirements of the puppets. To prove her point she and Vivian Michael produced a shock haired, red topped clown, an educated dog, and a weight lifting lion in a demonstration skit. With lively music, free use of props adeptly handled, and emphasis throughout on lively puppet business, she drove home her points.

Helen Haiman Joseph followed to explain the directors role in achieving showmanship. She pointed out that it is the directors job to unify the production as a whole, write or select the script, determine the style in which it shall be presented; supervise all sets, decor and props; select the puppeteers for dramatic ability, and in general guide the play toward that "magic moment." During rehearsal the director should not discourage or encourage the actors too soon for best results. Keeping the stage unmasked helps the director to recognize and keep spontaneous action that is good, and to eliminate any that is so difficult or uncertain that the puppeteers are working under a constant tension. It is the director's responsibility to anticipate accidents, to eliminate action that might lead to accident or confusion, and discover a better way. He must also motivate the necessary action brought about by the limitations and abilities of the puppet, emphasizing pantomime and keeping words at a minimum. Finally, he must polish it, polish it, polish it.

In summarizing, she urged every director to add as much glamour to the production as possible, to try for something in every act that is simply breathtaking. To conclude her remarks, she took puppet on hand and illustrated with the sure, deft movement of the experienced puppeteer the gestures and attitudes which convey meaning and focus attention.

PUPPETRY IN RELEGIOUS EDUCATION

The Rev. William Jacoby, Presbyterian minister from Booneville, Indiana gave an inspiring talk on puppetry in religious education.

Ninety percent of what children learn, he said, is learned thru visual media, and the percentage is increased when action can be added. He cited as an example an occasion of his own experience as director of religious education. By transferring the teaching method from lecture to the manipulation of simple moving figures of Biblical characters which the children themselves created, he found that the youngsters took greater interest in the subject material and developed, in addition, the spirit of cooperation which added to character development.

The Bible is full of tremendous dramatic material, Mr. Jacoby said, and there is no sense teaching it as tho it were a telephone book. "Puppetry, as we know it today, answers a thousand teaching problems, he admonished.

Festival Shows

NIGHT CLUB REVUE

John Shirley, acting as master of ceremonies, opened the first public performance of the Festival. John brought his experience as a night club operator to the performance with good effect and got both puppets and puppeteers off to a good start.

Harry Habata, professional piano-accordionist, modestly accompanied the night club acts through the first part of the program and then astounded and delighted the audience with his amazing original rendition entitled, "Cavalcade of American Music." Encored time and time again he ended his number with a hastily rehearsed, but most effective bit of comedy, - a puppet monkey assisting him on the keys.

The parade of lovely girls, Ruth Hill Poppenburg, Sally Sellers, the Gordon Sisters, and Marion Myers almost eclipsed the performance of their puppets. Clown jugglers, ball room teams, clown performers, dancers, skeletons, tap dancers and drum majorettes followed in rapid succession in fast moving night club style. The Gordon Sisters deviated from the night club routines to present a delightful Christmas play for children.

Dick Weston took a few days off from the army to bring "Eddie O'Connor" and demonstrate some first rate ventriloquial work. Having Eddie sing while he drank a glass of water was the highlight of his performance.

John Shirley tied the performance together with his own night club acts and routines, presenting a humorous clown, a juggler, a curious dog, a trapeze number, a dancing trio and a tap dancer.

This performance gave a glimpse of the "night life" of puppets, and illustrated the possibilities of one of the fields of puppet theater.

THE MAGIC SNEEZE

The New Orleans Junior League's presentation of The Magic Sneeze won the distinction of being one of the great shows of the festival. In every way it was superbly handled delighting the audience with its bizarre Mr. Zazola whose sneezes brought bad luck to anyone within his reach. It also intrigued even the professionals with its trick action of flying braids, tails, and ears. The show combined all the "bests" in puppet production: appealing characters, beautiful scenery, and rapid tempo with plenty of action. Who will forget the see saw or the skilfully executed hide and seek around the foot of the beautiful, big tree? Actually the production was a charming play and left nothing to be desired unless it was to see a repeat performance.

PRINCESS MORNING

Seventeen year old Jimmy Rose's **Princess Morning**, was one of the hits of the Festival. With a sweep and a flourish things really began to happen! Jimmy's hero, Monday Night, in search of adventure, Don Quixote style, found it and vanished the villain in the most extraordinary sequence of events yet witnessed. We have all seen wolfish suitors, but none with the absolute singleness of purpose and dispatch of Jimmy's black knight. Moreover, the Junior Rose's conception of Princess Morning might be worthy of a Detroit type psychological analysis. It was a puppet satire with values and joys for all.

ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

After having seen the characters from the **Ants and The Grasshopper** on display last year, the performance of the Roses was awaited and greeted with more than the usual amount of anticipation. Then, too, it was hailed as the first successful attempt at tape recording to be shown.

The fantasy of the Ant and The Grasshopper turned out to be a perfect media for the puppet theater. It combined the acme of artistry, movement, form, and color with musical interpretation and appropriate voice characterization.

The insects were so beautifully characterized that they seem to embody all human characteristics, yet did not detract from the abstract idea of the show.

Behind this, of course, was the technical skill and manipulation of the Roses bringing to life Aunt Prissy, the Spider, the Grasshopper, all unforgettable characters, whose theme and story were only a part of a flawless production.

ARE PUPPETS REAL

As Dean Raymond contends, and many a puppeteer will agree, when one first begins working with puppets, he operates them with conscious effort only; but as he continues to work with them, they seem to react more and more to situations without the conscious effort of the puppeteer, until finally the puppets seem to be "on their own" — even doing things the puppeteer had not anticipated.

With his See Saw Zoo puppets, regular stars on WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, Dean set out to develop his thesis. The puppet Brutus stubbornly defied all efforts on the part of others of the cast to convince him of his true identity as a puppet until at last he inadvertently exposed Dean's arm beneath the Professor's puppet sleeve with the loud accusation, "You dirty spy!"

Original satire, too seldom seen as a vehicle for puppets, was Dean's forte. His sharp wit and easy handling of the ridiculous were accomplished mainly through dialogue however, rather than through action of the puppets themselves. As Dean continues to develop his style, he will probably add more occasions for telling movement, within the limitations of the television frame, to strengthen the visual quality of his plays and to accentuate his particular brand of humor.

PANDORA'S BOX

Spence Gilmore, who specializes in entertaining small children did not change her approach when entertaining the puppeteers. Beginning at the zero point of no scenery, no props, she arouses the interest and imaginative faculty of the child by letting him always go beyond the simple suggestion to fill in the details. The puppet themselves prepare and set the stage. Who can miss the thrill of "Let's pretend" when a puppet brings out a rose as a background for Spanish dancers? Any child identifies himself with the baby kangaroo who keeps popping up after he has been put to bed. In the story of Pandora's Box various abstract qualities are actualized into forms easily grasped by the child's mind, and very subtle suggestions of behavior are deftly interwoven behind the fun. Who can forget the delight in the rollicking movement when the mischievous mouse plays with the wiener before making himself a sandwich, or Suzabelle where she wistfully dons her formal to wear at the festival? And Presto! a dream sequence is introduced transforming Suzabelle into an exotic dancer created for Spence by Rufus and Margo Rose. The children believe that Spence Gilmore's puppets are having fun., and that they love the children. Thus it follows quite naturally that the audience loves the puppets and has fun.

THE CRUCIFIXION

The Jacoby production of the Crucifixion was a laudable example of the use of the puppet theater to convey a serious and forceful message. By way of prelude, a recorded voice summarizes the message involved by comparing the relation of puppet to puppeteer with the relation between man and his creator. As the curtain opens, the solitary figure of the Apostle Peter is revealed as narrator describing the events leading up to the actual scene at Golgotha. The apostle vanishes as the narrative is continued and the Crucifixion is presented as his vision of memory. Actually it is this scene that the audience carries away. As the dramatic tension grows the picture comes to life, the head of Christ moves and he speaks, as do also the robbers crucified on either side. Other characters enter and exit, but always with great restraint and a minimum of movement. The figure on the cross is emphasized by highlighting, and the tableau becomes again inanimate to the accompaniment of the music of the Lord's Prayer. In this way the picture remains in the mind's eye long after the slow, scarcely perceived closing of the curtain.

(Continued on page 20)



PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

JEAN STARR WIKSELL

Jean Starr Wiksell, the newly elected president of the Puppeteers of America, demonstrates modeling and casting to a group of eager listeners, as part of the Lecture-Demonstration program of the Festival.

Jean will also be chairman of the 1952 Festival, scheduled to meet on the Louisiana State University campus next year. Having served most efficiently as president a few years ago, Jean is being welcomed back with a great deal of enthusiasm by those who have worked with her thru the years. Her enthusiasm and efficient management indicate to us that there is a good year ahead for the P of A.

THE SHREW

The astounding characters from **The Shrew** by Martin and Olga Stevens, - those utterly, utterly ridiculous creatures with their ingenious perversions of and diversions from the text, who brought the 1951 Festival to a hilarious ending. See review elsewhere.

THE EXHIBIT

Art Zapel leads one of the many discussions which took place in the exhibit hall at the Festival.

SPARKIE

Sparkie, the captivating puppet exhibited by Margo and Rufus Rose at the Festival will soon make his debut over ABC-TV. Conceived by the artist Leon Jacobs and constructed by Rufus Rose, Sparkie will be seen as part of Jon Arthur's TV version of his current radio programs, **Big Jon And Sparkie** and **No School Today**. Filming will be completed at the Herzog studios in Cincinnati. Jimmie Rose, who will enter Antioch College in the fall, will take time off from his studies to operate Sparkie.

In addition to this show, the Roses are returning to Connecticut to begin work on the NBC-TV program of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt which also starts this fall. The Roosevelt program will feature folk stories of 52 nations, with complete puppet casts of puppet animals and people.



Jean Starr Wiksell

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**New President
P of A**

Cedric Head and Trick Marionettes



Rena Prim

.....



**Margo,
Rufus**
and
**Jimmy
Rose**



Ants and the Grasshopper



**S
P
A
R
K
I
E**



Festival Exhibit



Discussion

.....

THE SHREW

by
the Stevens



**Marjorie
Batchelder
Mc Pharlin**





Each program will open in the living room of the Roosevelt's home in Hyde Park with Mrs. Roosevelt telling stories to her grandchildren and neighbor's children, as she frequently does in real life. Each week, the folk story of a different nation will be featured. The puppets will act out the story in pantomime, accompanied by a musical background.

Mrs. Roosevelt says she feels a responsibility to get across to our American children an understanding of the children of other countries, thus establishing a bond which will lead toward worldwide peace.

The story **The Ants And The Grasshopper** is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

CEDRIC HEAD

Cedric Head, who will be well remembered by 1950 Festival members for his colorful demonstrations and variety show in the gymnasium, not only contributed his performances but brought to the Festival a large part of his historic collections of puppets. He owns one of the largest historic collections in this country, including many very rare puppets and most of the Tony Sarg original collection.

Operating under the name of the Kingsland Marionettes, the Heads began production in 1931; later opened a summer school of puppetry at Lake Dunmore, Vt., which continued until World War II. He has toured extensively thru the East and the South with a repertoire of children's classics and variety acts.

RENA PRIM

Rena Prim is shown here with the marionettes from **Princess Moonbeam**, produced by an adult class from the Houston Civic Theater Puppet Playhouse, located on the University of Houston campus. In addition to serving as director for Puppet Playhouse Rena finds time to teach art in the public schools and produce her own shows under the name of Rena Marionettes.

MARJORIE BATCHELDER MCPHARLIN

Marjorie McPharlin displays St. Peter and the Angel, two of her most recent rod puppets. Marjorie is perhaps best known for her contribution to puppetry in the field of rod puppets. Years of experimentation in that field, led to a Ph. D. from Ohio State University and culminated in the publishing of **Rod Puppets And The Human Theater** in 1947, the most comprehensive study that has ever been made in that field.



Festival Shows

(Continued from page 9)

THE MAGIC LIGHT

Ed Johnson's **Magic Light** was a seldom-told Greenland folktale. The simplicity of the setting with its illusion of cold, distance, and loneliness was excellent. The polar bear and playful seal made noises resembling talk understandable and delightful. The bear had been terrorizing the villagers for quite some time. Gustav did not want to kill animals—he talked with them and was their friend. But this was highly impractical in a civilization that depended on hunting and killing for its very life. So Gustav was scorned by Christine and banished by his parents.

His kyack was overturned by the gaily leaping seal, and he sought refuge on an iceberg. Here he met and befriended the bear, who had injured his paw. Because of his kindness he was privileged to see the goddess who dances against a background of northern lights only on those very rare occasions when one has done a great service to animals. And so boy not only got girl, but paraded the streets as the village hero, astride the bear, who promised never to harm anyone again.

Rushing back stage to discover the magic in puppetry, the audience saw the cold background of ice blue jersey and the icebergs made of blocks covered with white terry cloth. Intricate and well controlled lightning had produced most of the magic. Ed Johnson had done the entire performance unassisted, being all the voices and noises, scene changer, manipulator of lights and marionettes. He had produced not only magic but a miracle in a one man show.

MACBETH AND THE SHREW

Macbeth, the Stevens production, demonstrated first the tremendous possibilities of the open proscenium and effective lighting. As scene after scene unfolded, it reminded one of Norman Bel Geddes with the changing lights and moods which gave the illusion of different scenes and sets.

The slow stylized action and deliberate movement obtainable only with the rod puppet gave this production a distinctive quality of its own.

Part of its uniqueness stemmed from the combination of rods and shadows which allowed an interpretation of the visions impossible to attain in the human theater.

In direct contrast, **The Taming of the Shrew** portrayed by fist puppets gave the spectators a glimpse of the reason for the popularity of the fist puppets of the Medieval period. The hilarity, the broad humor, the exaggeration of character and action added to the delight of the audience. Nothing could have more fully illustrated the difference in the conception of the two types of drama as depicted by two strongly contrasted types of puppets.

Films

Several films, new to the P of A audiences were shown at both the Festival and the Institute.

The Lost Sheep was the work of Mabel and Les Beaton of Rye, N. Y. who are working in a relatively new field, dramatizing Bible stories for film and TV with marionettes. Mabel and Les, with a capable staff, design, make and operate their own marionettes. The film was a reverent, dramatic portrayal of the well known story, with authentic costumes and settings, filmed in rich and vivid color.

The Toymaker, from an original script by Martin Stevens was produced by the Stevens-Rose Film Co. It involved the difficult situation of combining puppeteer and puppets. With Rufus Rose taking the part of the Toymaker, none of the illusion was destroyed by having the hand puppets, Spots and Stripes, discuss their problems with him. Exceedingly well done from the technical standpoint, it was a most convincing and colorful portrayal of the theme of brotherhood.

The Ant and The Grasshopper, produced by the same company was a slight deviation from the musical fantasy of the same name produced by the Roses this last year. Filming permitted the story to be carried even farther into the realm of fantasy, and colorful three-dimensional settings with frequent and well selected close-ups added something which could not be achieved in the live show. Manipulation in the film is outstanding; the effects leave little to be desired.

The Way of Peace, under the direction of Blanding Sloan, may have been more professional than some of the others, technically it achieved results with considerable artistry, but the constant repetition of the horrors of atomic bombing left a depressed audience. Its story was driven home long before the end of the film.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Due to duplications in reporting, variations in length of articles and a number of unforeseen circumstances, it was necessary to re-write articles until we felt it was unfair to attach signatures to them. You owe your Festival reports to the following: Ethel Wallace, Alfred Wallace, Jean Wiksell, Wesley Wiksell, Hazel Darling, Lewis Parsons, Louise Brunson, Beatrice Weber, Rena Prim, Wilhelmena Hedde, Art Zapel, Helen Joseph, Emma Warfield, Marie Gordon, and several others who did not sign their contributions. We are deeply grateful to all of these.

As letters from puppeteers come into the "Journal" office, it is interesting to note the increasing number of letter-heads which bear the P of A insignia, or the line, "Member of the Puppeteers of America." Will you include it in your next printing?

If you failed to get it on your last printing, you can remedy the situation very quickly by sending to the Executive office for a supply of the new attractive blue and gold "Membership" stickers.

The Institute

An industrious group of 43 persons, whose ages ranged from the teens to 80 years, and whose interests were just as varied, attended the Puppetry Institute at Western College, Oxford, Ohio, immediately following the national Festival of the Puppeteers of America.

Mrs. Alice Fox of Cooperstown, N. Y., who radiated gracious charm and contagious enthusiasm, in spite of her 80 years, was everyone's sweetheart. Nine year old Tony Little, who accompanied his mother, Lucy Little of London, Ontario, ran errands, made a "super" white bunny, and appeared on an evening show.

Puppetry interests of the Institute personnel were wide and varied,—Roberta Mack of California, who, by the way, brought as much to the Institute as she took away, works with spastics in a hospital program; Louise Pizzia was a histologist; Louise Becksmith was a portrait painter who brought all her knowledge of anatomy and applied it to her marionette; Michael Fellows, a squadron leader in the British air force, but now located in the Pentagon, brought a problem of how to create a gremlin to the Institute to be solved. Theater directors, technicians, art supervisors and teachers, Junior League delegates, hobbyists and would-be professionals worked together, each with a definite goal in mind. Members from 18 states and Canada shared their own experiences and carried on an intensive work program under the leadership of Martin and Olga Stevens, Rufus and Margo Rose, Ruth and William I. Duncan and Vivian Michael.

The theme song of the Institute carried over from **The Ants and the Grasshopper** was "Work, Work, Work!" The work was intensive, thorough, practical and well guided. Class sessions of eight hours a day lengthened into twelve — eighteen and in some cases to twenty-four hours a day. Evening programs consisted of informal group discussions on staging, lighting, costuming, properties, script writing, showmanship, etc.

Class work covered actual practice in modeling, casting, carving, construction, painting, controls and stringing. Divided into sections of eight, the class was able to obtain much individual help from the six expert instructors. Seventeen of the members qualified for two hours of college credit. Others did not desire credit.

Just as varied as the personnel of the Institute were the results of the eight days work. In the final parade was an opera singer, with heaving breast, a negress night club entertainer, a beautiful dancer, a dwarf, beautifully carved, clowns, majorettes, tramps, Dodo birds, owls, a dog hand puppet modeled from life, old men, old women, circus ringmasters, and others. Some lacked the finishing touches of costume, but the personality parade was complete.

Each person completed at least two puppets, in most cases a marionette and a hand and rod or hand puppet. In leaving, it is said that each person looking back on their "Work, work, work!" program was secretly dreaming of that restful trip down the Mississippi River on a Show Boat, when next year's Institute convenes at Louisiana State University.

Rehearsing the Play

Helen Haiman Joseph

(Helen Haiman Joseph is the author of **A Book of Marionettes**, a standard history of puppets. In addition, she has written many plays and has produced professionally a wide repertoire of plays. Possibly no one in puppetry today has directed more plays or trained more young puppeteers.)

No part of the puppet show is more important than the rehearsal. For old timers, this is a cliché, - but newer puppeteers should give it more than a passing thought.

No puppet show, regardless of beautiful puppets, costumes, scenery, lighting, props, scripts or manipulation, can be a good show unless there are sufficient rehearsals to pull all these elements together. No matter how right the ingredients that you put into a cake, unless you stir and bake it properly, long enough and (also) not too long, it will not be a good cake. Rehearsing a show is the baking of a cake. You don't want a half baked show! Rehearse!

Suggestions are many: here are a few:

Have a director, sitting out in front. Nobody below or above or behind the stage can tell how the puppets look from the front, nor can they view the whole stage as a picture every minute of the rehearsal. Again, a good show needs a director in front!

Save time for rehearsals before your production deadline. Rather have less tricky props and less elaborate costumes etc., than a lack of smoothness in performance. The amateur can always be spotted by the scenes that do not run smoothly and which need more rehearsal.

Make the action work smoothly. If a trick or a stunt or an entrance is hazardous, rehearse until it is sure fire, or omit it. Never take a chance on slipping up. Red Riding Hood has to pick up her basket every time, easily, or change the line and fasten it on her hand off stage.

Characterize each personality through voice and gesture. Some of your audience may be too far away to see the painted smiles and frowns on little faces but they will see and feel the character if your voices and gestures convey them. This takes practice. A puppet can express the simplest phrase in a dozen ways. Which means most to the play? Work at it.

Keep your eye on your puppet. Then there will be no sagging or slumping or floating puppets. Knees should stay straight, arms of hand puppets should stay down and heads should behave. Gestures will eventually come right if you concentrate every single second on your own puppet. The director in front can help you co-ordinate your puppet with others on the stage.

Be comfortable, - on the bridge or in the booth. Don't have puppeteers in each others' way or reaching too terrifically. Figure out comfort as far as possible. If there are human tangles, change the lines or business to relax things for the puppeteer. A puppeteer who can take

it easy can think about his puppet, not his backache. All early rehearsals, of course, must have the puppeteers unshielded from the director.

A good schedule for rehearsals is, roughly, as follows:

1. Read manuscript and tentatively assign parts.
2. Read with puppeteers manipulating just for entrance, exits, and to smooth out stage action, crossing, interference, etc.
3. Rehearse lines, memorized, by puppeteers, with a prompter.
4. Manipulators work puppets and speak lines, - until no one has to think twice about where to go or what to do.
5. Concentrate on voice characterizations, gestures, special and telling phrases and movement, tempo, smoothness, etc. This last phase is the one that takes time and is the finishing touch so often omitted by hurried and harried groups of puppeteers. Too bad, for it makes all the difference between a good and a bad show.
6. Don't over rehearse; it will make the show stale. By going step by step, however, and saying the delicate touches for last, the cast is not so apt to get sick and tired before the play.
7. A dress rehearsal before a kind, but truthful audience of friends ahead of your first public performance, may save many a heartache. Really this too, is important!

To Each His Own

Helen Haiman Joseph

Would you compare etchings and paintings to the advantage or disadvantage of either? Both are pictures, true, but etchings appeal to some folks, paintings to others. Etchings are effective in small places, paintings are for larger rooms or great halls.

Which is finer music, symphony concerts or string quartets? Why, whichever you prefer, depending upon when and where. Both are fine music. You couldn't use one, when you need the other. One may have more finesse and charm, one more breadth and grandeur. They are just different ways of expressing music.

Hand puppets, marionettes, rod puppets, shadow puppets . . . each a separate branch of puppetry, each with a charm and magic of its own, each suited to its own type of production. Can you choose?

Council Notes

Business sessions of the Council at the Festival were brief and to the point.

A new constitution prepared by Wesley Wiksell was adopted.

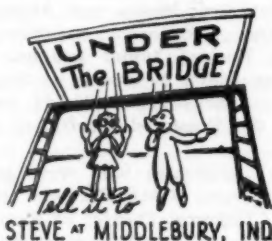
Louisiana State University, with Jean and Wesley Wiksell in charge, will be the site for the 1952 Festival and Institute.

Jean Wiksell will be president of the Council for the coming year, - Meredith Bixby will be vice president.

William Duncan continues to serve as executive secretary under his three year appointment.

Vivian Michael and Peg Blickle will again edit the Journal.

New members elected to the Council were, Alfred Wallace, Basil Milovsoroff, Sally Sellers and Meredith Bixby.



The Festival is over. Once again it has fulfilled its function, - to show P of A members in attendance what is actually being done in puppetry. Certainly we saw more than was ever seen by a comparable group of people before the P of A was born. I know I learned a lot; yes, you can "teach an old dog new tricks."

All blessings - much as we hate to admit it - do not flow exclusively from the Festival . . . **Mario Zarlengo** of Denver writes, "We gave our first professional show June 20th. We owe much to the **Gilmores** for their great help" . . . **Bill Cleveland**, George School, Pa., continues to enlarge his puppetry collection and library . . . **Palmer Martin Marionettes**, Tarrytown, N. Y. worked a carnival during June, did **Dick Whittington** for a N. J. movie chain during July, and a string of drive-ins during August . . . **John Zweers** plugged the P of A in the Pasadena Star. John is a president of the Future Teachers of America and intends to supplement his history teaching with puppets.

The Emperor's Nightingale, a Czech stop-action puppet movie, which played in New York City's Trans-Lux Theater this summer was enthusiastically reviewed in the May 14th N. Y. World by Alton Cook, who said, among other nice things: "The prologue and the epilogue about the real little boy are too long, but when the puppets take over the theater beams with a lovely and witty spirit that floods the whole audience. Every detail of the picture has been touched with inspired imagination" . . . **Lou Bunin's Alice in Wonderland** film, produced in England and France in association with J. Arthur Rank, was scheduled to premiere in America at the Mayfair and 60th St. Trans-Lux theaters in New York, July 28th. Good luck, Lou . . . **Frank Paris** and 50 odd puppets are appearing in a new extravaganza at the La Vie En Rose in New York . . . **Variety** (May 16) quotes Lillian Gish tying together the names of two of the theater great, - **David Mark Griffith** and **Burr Tillstrom**.

Continental Puppets were exhibited at the National Convention of Federated Women's Clubs at Tuscon this year . . . the exhibitor, - **Mrs.**

R. V. Quam . . . Shirley O'Donnell taught puppetry at Cain Park Theater, Cleveland, June 18th to July 28, producing 60 puppets in six weeks!

Time magazine says (May 14) in reviewing a book on **George Bernard Shaw's** plays: "Perhaps the best fun among his last plays come out of the **Shakes Versus Shaw**, a puppet play in which he restates his half-serious, half-mocking claim to being the Shakespeare of his own day."

Dean Raymond and other artistes on WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, recently pulled in \$3000.00 in an hour long cancer fund drive . . . **Mrs. Mills** (Mills and Dunn, **Marionettes, Masks and Shadows**) is retiring from La. State University to live at Millbrook, Sapphire, N. Carolina.

Hartford (love that Nestor) **Junior League**, couldn't perform this year . . . **Portland Oregon Junior League** is writing a new play based on the **Nutracker Sulte**, . . . **Jacksonville Florida Junior League** is doing a new play, - **Freddie, the Frustrated Firefly**, as also are **New Orleans** and **Lansing**.

Western College girl' graduates who were second year attendants at the Fest and Institute were; **Susan Ott**, who uses puppetry in her work as director of the Childrens' Theater of Keene, N. Hampshire, and **Virginia (Bunny) Knox** who finds puppetry valuable in her staff work at WHIO-TV Dayton. **Marjorie White**, still in college, uses her knowledge on TV.

Did we tell you **Sylvia** and **Archie Elliot** had a new little **Elliot** in April? . . . Not only is **Howdy Doody** a comic strip, but the **Kuklapollitans** of **Burr Tillstrom** are a full page comic, on the **Tweeny-Weeny** format . . . On the 4th of July, the students at the P of A institute voted unanimously that the faculty should take the afternoon off. There is absolutely no truth to the rumor that the faculty refused for fear the students would get ahead of them . . . **Vivian Michael** (faculty) is a Delta Phi Delta . . . as are a number of other P of A members . . . **Ball State Teachers College**, Muncie, Indiana sent practically their whole chapter to attend one day's session of the Festival . . . going to have an article on puppetry in their national magazine, **The Palette**, this fall.

Just read a snappy news item: "A public exhibition of any kind that tends to the corruption of morals, or to a disturbance of the peace or of the general order of welfare of society, is a **public nuisance**. Under this head are all **puppet shows**, legerdemain and obscene pictures, and all other exhibitions, the natural tendency of which is to pander vicious tastes, and to draw together the vicious and dissolute members of society. (Commonwealth v McGovern, ct. of appeals, Ky., 1903)."

Ed Johnson brought his "to be" with him while he did his show at the Festival, and she heard him get all that applause. Then, she went home and married him.

The eight foot U. S. map in the P of A office, with colored pins for all the members (there's one for you!) makes a very imposing array. You should stop in and see it when you're down that way . . . **Cy Kelly** is now doing puppets, made by **Jim Rose**, over WLW-TV, Cincinnati.

Here we go into another year. The column is the same - the address is the same: only the things you're doing are different. What are they? Tell 'em to

Steve
Middlebury, Indiana

It Could Happen To You

Roberta Mack, of San Mateo, California, who delighted every one at the Institute, with those helpful suggestion about simple puppets for children, and who works with spastic children in the hospitals, came to the Festival simply "loaded down" with luggage. A favorite frog puppet, chosen because there was concealed in his body an ingenious "croaking" device was packed among other puppets. An obliging porter looked a bit startled when a shift in the luggage caused the suitcase to emit a wailing sound. Roberta smiled but offered no explanation. All went well until she was pulling into the Chicago depot, when to her consternation, the police boarded the train and searched her luggage for the "baby" that she was supposed to have concealed in one of her bags. In the future, Roberta will probably explain any mysterious noise to the porter as she goes along.

From the Memoirs of Rufus Rose Marionettes

During an engagement at a southern girl's college the negro custodian of the auditorium spoke to me following the matinee performance. It seemed that because of his official job he had been able to see the show, thus circumventing the Jim Crow law in the South which excludes colored folks from an audience of white people. He had enjoyed the show immensely and wanted to have his wife see it. "Could I do anything for her?" I invited her to see the evening show from backstage . . . She arrived well ahead of time in full regalia, all 300 pounds of her glorious self, very grateful for our consideration. The inadequacy of a folding chair was apparent, and fortunately there was a large sofa on the stage which she overflowed as she watched the show from one side. She was having a whee of a time and grinned from ear to ear as the show progressed. Once in a while she would look up at us puppeteers as we spoke the lines for the little actors. Then her face would cloud up and quickly she returned her gaze to the puppets where the real show was going on. After the performance I asked her how she had liked the show. "Oh, I thought it was jest fine, jest fine. Yassir, those little folks certainly knows how to act. But there's jest one thing I wish you'd 'splain to me. Why do you big folks stand up there yellin' at 'em all the time?"



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